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(54) Polyolefin production

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(57) Use of a metallocene catalyst component of general formula $R''(CpR_m)(Cp'R'_n)MQ_2$ in the production of linear low density polyolefin, wherein Cp is a cyclopentadienyl moiety, Cp' is a substituted or unsubstituted fluorenyl ring; R'' is a structural bridge imparting stereorigidity to the component; each R is independently hydrogen or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $0 \le m \le 4$; each R' is independently hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $0 \le n \le 8$; M is a Group IVB transition metal or vanadium; and each Q is hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms or halogen; the metallocene having a centroid-M-centroid angle in the range 105° to 125°.

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a process for the preparation of polyolefins, especially polyethylenes, the use of metallocene compounds as catalyst components in the production of such polyolefin and the polyolefins obtainable thereby.

[0002] Low density polyethylene (LDPE) offers excellent optical properties and can be processed at relatively low temperatures and pressures while maintaining a good melt strength. LDPE has however limited possibilities for downgauging, due to a low draw ratio, and a low stiffness.

[0003] Linear-low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) has greatly improved downgauging possibilities and excellent tear and impact properties; its stiffness however remains low and its processability is well below that of LDPE. Also, conventional LLDPE's optical properties do not match those of LDPE. Optical properties of LLDPE have been improved by using metallocene-catalysed LDPE (mLLDPE) resins; stiffness is however not improved in these products and the processability of these grades is generally worse than that of conventional LLDPE.

[0004] Wherever high rigidity is needed, LDPE and LLDPE compositions will require overly thick structures. Especially for LLDPE, where excellent impact and tear properties render its downgauging capability useful, the lack of rigidity may be a main drawback. High rigidity maybe a requirement for the end product, it is very often a necessity for product handling.

[0005] In the production of such polyethylene compositions, it is possible to use reaction systems based on a Ziegler-Natta catalyst or a chromium-based catalyst. These reaction systems require a high concentration of comonomer. This suffers from a drawback in that high concentration of comonomer results in increased solubility of the polyethylene produced in a slurry process. One consequence of the increased solubility of polymer is that there is a high incidence of reactor fouling. Use of a high concentration of comonomer is also costly because of the need to recycle unincorporated comonomer.

[0006] It is an aim of the present invention to overcome these disadvantages.

[0007] The present invention provides use of a metallocene catalyst component of general formula $R''(CpR_m)(Cp'R'_n)MQ_2$ in the production of linear low density polyolefin, wherein Cp is a cyclopentadienyl moiety, Cp' is a substituted or unsubstituted fluorenyl ring; R'' is a structural bridge imparting stereorigidity to the component; each R is independently hydrogen or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $0 \le m \le 4$; each R' is independently hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $0 \le n \le 8$; M is a Group IVB transition metal or vanadium; and each Q is hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms or halogen; the metallocene having a centroid-M-centroid angle in the range 105° to 125°.

[0008] Figure 1 shows the effect of decreasing the centroid-M-centroid angle in Zr-based metallocenes. The metallocenes of the present invention have a very open structure which permits the facile incorporation of comonomer with larger substituents such as hexene in polyolefin production. In this way, LLDPE with densities around 0.9 or lower may be produced at a commercially acceptable polymerisation temperature in a slurry process. The production of LLDPE with such low densities has hitherto not been possible with Cr-based and closed structure Cent-Zr-Cent (>125°) metallocenes in a loop slurry process. Lower comonomer concentrations need be used in the process thereby reducing the likelihood of reactor fouling and avoiding excessive use of expensive comonomer.

[0009] Preferably Cp is a substituent cyclopentadienyl in which each R is independently XR*3 in which X is C or Si and each R* is independently H or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms. More preferably the cyclopentadienyl is substituted with Ph₂CH, Me₃C, Me₃Si, Me, Me and Me₃C,Me and SiMe₃, Me and Ph, or Me and CH₃-CH-CH₃.

[0010] Preferably, each R' is independently YR"3 in which Y is C or Si and each R" is independently H or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

[0011] The structural bridge R" is generally alkylidene having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a dialkyl germanium or silicon or siloxane, alkyl phosphine or amine, preferably Me-C-Me, Ph-C-Ph,-CH₂-, Et-C-Et, Me-Si-Me, Ph-Si-Ph or Et-Si-Et.

[0012] The metal M is preferably Zr or Hf and each Q is preferably Cl.

[0013] In order to maximise comonomer incorporation, it is preferred that the centroid-M-centroid angle is no more than 119°.

[0014] In a further aspect, the present invention provides a process for the preparation of a linear low-density polyolefin, which comprises reacting an olefin monomer with hydrogen and an α-olefin comonomer in the presence of a catalyst comprising (i) the metallocene catalyst and (ii) an aluminium- or boron-containing cocatalyst. The comonomer is preferably hexene, typically present in an amount of from 2 to 10, preferably 2 to 5% by weight of the total reaction mixture.

[0015] Suitable aluminium-containing cocatalysts comprise an alumoxane, an alkyl aluminium and/or a Lewis acid.

[0016] The alumoxanes usable in the process of the present invention are well known and preferably comprise oligomeric linear and/or cyclic alkyl alumoxanes represented by the formula:

for oligomeric, linear alumoxanes and

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for oligomeric, cyclic alumoxane, wherein n is 1-40, preferably 10-20, m is 3-40, preferably 3-20 and R is a C₁-C₈ alkyl group and preferably methyl. Generally, in the preparation of alumoxanes from, for example, aluminium trimethyl and water, a mixture of linear and cyclic compounds is obtained.

[0017] Suitable boron-containing cocatalysts may comprise a triphenylcarbenium boronate such as tetrakis-pentafluorophenylborato-triphenylcarbenium as described in EP-A-0427696, or those of the general formula [L'-H]⁺ [B Ar₁ Ar₂ $X_3 X_4$] as described in EP-A-0277004 (page 6, line 30 to page 7, line 7).

[0018] The catalyst system may be employed in a solution polymerisation process, which is homogeneous, or a slurry process, which is heterogeneous. In a solution process, typical solvents include hydrocarbons with 4 to 7 carbon atoms such as heptane, toluene or cyclohexane. In a slurry process it is necessary to immobilise the catalyst system on an inert support, particularly a porous solid support such as talc, inorganic oxides and resinous support materials such as polyolefin. Preferably, the support material is an inorganic oxide in its finally divided form.

[0019] Suitable inorganic oxide materials which are desirably employed in accordance with this invention include Group 2a, 3a, 4a or 4b metal oxides such as silica, alumina and mixtures thereof. Other inorganic oxides that may be employed either alone or in combination with the silica, or alumina are magnesia, titania, zirconia, and the like. Other suitable support materials, however, can be employed, for example, finely divided functionalized polyolefins such as finely divided polyethylene.

[0020] Preferably, the support is a silica having a surface area comprised between 200 and 900 m²/g and a pore volume comprised between 0.5 and 4 ml/g.

[0021] The amount of alumoxane and metallocenes usefully employed in the preparation of the solid support catalyst can vary over a wide range. Preferably the aluminium to transition metal mole ratio is in the range between 1:1 and 100:1, preferably in the range 5:1 and 50:1.

[0022] The order of addition of the metallocenes and alumoxane to the support material can vary. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention alumoxane dissolved in a suitable inert hydrocarbon solvent is added to the support material slurried in the same or other suitable hydrocarbon liquid and thereafter a mixture of the metallocene catalyst component is added to the slurry.

[0023] Preferred solvents include mineral oils and the various hydrocarbons which are liquid at reaction temperature and which do not react with the individual ingredients. Illustrative examples of the useful solvents include the alkanes such as pentane, iso-pentane, hexane, heptane, octane and nonane; cycloalkanes such as cyclopentane and cyclohexane, and aromatics such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and diethylbenzene.

[0024] Preferably the support material is slurried in toluene and the metallocene and alumoxane are dissolved in toluene prior to addition to the support material.

[0025] Where the reaction is performed in a slurry using, for example, isobutane, a reaction temperature in the range 70°C to 110°C may be used. Where the reaction is performed in solution, by selection of a suitable solvent a reaction temperature in the range 150°C to 300°C may be used. The reaction may also be performed in the gas phase using a suitably supported catalyst.

[0026] A linear low-density polyethylene is obtainable from the process with a density below 0.93g/cc and preferably in the range 0.90 to 0.92. The polyethylene preferably has a molecular weight distribution in the range 2 to 4.5, preferably around 3 and more preferably is partially long chain branched so as to facilitate processing.

[0027] This invention will now be described in further detail by way of example only, with reference to the following

Examples and accompanying drawings, in which:

[0028] FIGURE 1 shows centroid-M-centroid angles for some metallocenes.

Example 1

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Catalyst Preparation

[0029] Me₂CCpFluZrCl₂ was prepared in accordance with the method of Razavi and Ferrara published in Journal of Organometallic Chemistry, 435 (1992) pages 299 to 310.

[0030] The support used in a silica having a total pore volume of 4.22 ml/g and a surface area of 322 m²/g. This silica is further prepared by drying in high vacuum on a schlenk line for three hours to remove the physically absorbed water. 5g of this silica are suspended in 50 ml of toluene and placed in a round bottom flask equipped with magnetic stirrer, nitrogen inlet and dropping funnel.

[0031] An amount of 0.31 g of the metallocene is reacted with 25 ml of methylalumoxane (MAO 30 wt% in toluene) at a temperature of 25°C during 10 minutes to give a solution mixture of the corresponding metallocenium cation and the anionic methylalumoxane oligomer.

[0032] Then the resulting solution comprising the metallocenium cation and the anionic methylalumoxane oligomer is added to the support under a nitrogen atmosphere via the dropping funnel which is replaced immediately after with a reflux condenser. The mixture is heated to 110°C for 90 minutes. Then the reaction mixture is cooled down to room temperature, filtered under nitrogen and washed with toluene.

[0033] The catalyst obtained is then washed with pentane and dried under a mild vacuum.

Examples 2 to 7

Bench Scale Polymerisation procedures and results

[0034] Each polymerisation run was performed as described in the following Tables in a 4l autoclave type reactor. In all cases a polymerisation temperature of 80°C was used and the diluent was 2l of isobutane. The catalyst in each case was prepared in accordance with the method indicated.

[0035] It will be apparent from each of Examples 2a, 2b, 2c and 3, as set out in Tables 1 to 4 respectively, that polyethylene products of low density are obtainable according to the invention, especially in the presence of hexene comonomer. High molecular weights are also apparent. This contrasts with comparative Examples 4 to 7 where higher densities are obtained.

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Table 1 - Polymerization with PhiCOpFluZrCl1/SiO, ASAHI', H121c.MAO* (Example 2a)

Influence of the hexens/ethylene wt ratio on the fluff density

ō	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.4	`	`
Q	4.7	4.0	4.4	3.8	5.7	\	\
Mz (kDa)	650	918	958	902	119	_	_
Mw (kDa)	201	304	336	307	197	_	`
Mn (kDa)	43	76	. 91	81	35	`	_
Density (g/cc)	0.942	0.914	0.918	0.912	806.0	868.0	968.0
S.	37	`	~	~	44	_	`
HIMI (g/lOmin)	2.09	0.32	71.0	0.36	2.74	0.08	0.12
M1 ₂ (g/10min)	90.0	too low	too low	too low	90.0	too low	too low
Hourly Prod. (gPE/gcat/h	820	1,620	2,540	2,130	700	3854	12644
C6/C2 wt% ratio	00.00	0.41	0.61	0.81	1.22	1.22	1.62
Entry	1	2	m	4	5(1)	6(2)	7(2)
		. •	~	***		٠.	*

Monomer: 6wt% ethylene; (1):4wt%ethylene

Key: MI2 = Melt index; Mn = number average molecular weight; Mw = weight average molecular weight; D = Mw/Mn; D' Mz/Mw; SR = Shear Ratio (HLMI/MI2)

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Hydrogen: 0.25 NI

^{*} made according to the method of Razavi and Atwood J. Organometallic Chem. 459 (1993), 117-123.

Influence of the hexene/ethylene wt ratio on the fluff density

Table 2 - Polymerization with PhyCCpFluZrCl2/SiO2 ASAHI', H121c.MAO* (Example 2b)

SR Density (g/cc)	too high / 0.923	too biah / 0.918
	/ ubi	igh /
HLMI (9/10)	too h	too
MI ₂ (g/10min)	11.29	80.00
Hydrogen 1-hexens C6/C2 Hourly Prod. MI_2 HLMI (N1) (wt%) wt% ratio (gPE/gCat/h) (g/10min) (g/10min)	1,560	980
C6/C2 wt% ratio		1.22
Ethylene Hydrogen 1-hexene C6/C2 (wt%) (N1) (wt%) wt% ra	2.44 0.41	0.25 4.88 1.22
Hydrogen (N1)	0.25	0.25
Ethylene (wt%)	9	4
Entry	ч	~

* made according to the method of Razavi and Atwood J. Organometallic Chem. 459 (1993), 117-123

Table 3 - Polymerization with PhyCCpFluZrCl2/SiO, ASAHI H121c.MAO* (Example 2c)

Influence of the hydrogen content on the melt index

í	3.0	3.4 3.4
ı		3.4
ı	918	444
ı	304	131
I	92	39
0.913	0.914	36 0.918
_	_	36
too low	0.32	9.91
too low	too low	0.27
880	1,620	1,200
00.00	0.25	1.00
н	8	m
		_
	880 too low too low / 0.913	880 too low too low / 0.913 1,620 too low 0.32 / 0.914 76 304 918 4.0

[|] C6/C2 wt ratio:0.41

Key: MI2 = Melt index; Mn = number average molecular weight; Mw = weight average molecular weight;

D = Mw/Mn; D' = Mz/Mw; SR = Shear Ratio (HLMI/MI2)

^{*}made according to Razavi and Atwood J.Organometallic Chem. 497 (1995), 105-111

Table 4

Γ	Polymerization with Me ₂ C(3tBuCp)FluZrCl ₂ /SiO ₂ , ASAHI H121C.MAO* (Example 3)									
	Entry	Ethylene (wt%)	hydrogen (NI)	C6/C2 wt% ratio	Hourly Prod. (gPE/gCat/h)	MI ₂ (g/10min)	HLMI (g/10min)	Density (g/cc)		
	1	6	0.25	0.00	900	too low	too low	0.930		
	2	6	0.25	0.41*	2,670	too low	0.06	0.917		
'	3	6	0.25	0.41	3,280	too low	0.13	0.920		
	4	6	0.25	0.61*	2,600	too low	0.03	0.913		
	5	6	0.25	0.61	3,550	too low	0.01	0.913		
	6	6	0.25	0.81	2,770	too low	0.16	0.913		
ı	7	4	0.25	1.22*	1,550	too low	1.20	0.910		
- 1	8	3	0.25	1.62*	1,410	too low	1.60	0.907		

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^{(*):} no prepolym.
* made according to Razavi and Atwood J.Organometallic Chem. <u>520</u> (1996), 115-120

5	Density	0.946	0.933	<0.930
	ಜ	_	77	89
ative)	HLMI (g/10min)	90.0	6.89	3.85
50 Comparative	MI ₂ (g/10min)	too low	60.0	0.04
7able 5 - Polymerization with Et(THI), ZrCl2,/SiO2, MAO (Example 4	Hourly Prod. MI ₂ (gPE/gCat/h) (g/10min)	9,175	23,000	14,817
% Src1,/sic	C6/C2 wt% ratio	0	0.41	0.61
ich Bt (THI	1-hexene C6/C2 (wt%) wt% ratio	0	2.44	3.66
or rization w	Hydrogen (N1)	0.25	0.25	0.25
төш ү гө -	Entry Ethylene (Wt%)	9	9	9
Table 5	Entry	ч	81	ю

EP 0 969 019 A1

5		Density (g/cc)	0.951	0.942	0.938	0.932	<0.930	<0.930
		83 84	51	55	122	140	67	48
10	Comparative)	HLMI (g/10min)	28.2	47.5	5.49	4.49	17.97	73.93
20	1	MI ₂ (g/10min)	0.55	0.87	0.05	0.03	0.27	1.54
25	- Polymerization with $\mathtt{Et}(\mathtt{Ind})_2\mathtt{ZrCl}_2/\mathtt{SiO}_2$, MAO (Example 5	<pre>Hourly Prod. (gPE/gCat/h)</pre>	3,430	6,040	004,7	10,280	10,020	2,600
30	.) ₂ zrCl ₂ /810 _{2.}	C6/C2 B	0.00	0.10	0.20	0.41	0.61 1	0.81 5
35	1th Bt (Ind	1-hexene (wt%)	0.00	0.61	1.22	2.44	3.66	4.88
40	rization w	Hydrogen (N1)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
45		Entry Ethylene (wt%)	9	9	9	9	9	9
50	Table 6	Entry	н	77	æ	4	Ŋ	9

EP 0 969 019 A1

5		Density	0.956	0.947	0.944	0.936	0.933	0.930
		S	20	17	16	16	16	17
10	ative)	HLMI (g/10min)	11.43	28.08	30.60	32.54	37.97	44.72
20	6 - Comparative)	MI ₂ (g/10min)	0.58	1.66	1.89	2.05	2.36	2.67
25	Table 7- Polymerization with $({ m nBuCp})_2 { m ZrCl}_2/{ m SiO}_2$. MAO $({ m Example}\ { m 6}$ -	Hourly Prod. (gPE/gCat/h)	4,506	4,400	6,480	7,050	008'9	6,720
30	22rCl ₂ /S10 ₂ .	C6/C2 1 wt% ratio	00.0	0.05	0.20	0.41	0.61	0.81
35	th (nBuCp)	1-bexene (wt%)	00.0	0.30	1.22	2.44	3.66	4.88
40	zation wit	Hydrogen (N1)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
45	- Polymeri	Entry Ethylene (wt%)	9	9	vo	v	9	v
50	Table 7	Entry		8	ო	작	ഹ	u

EP 0 969 019 A1

5		Density	0.955	0.943	0.938	0.934	0.935
		88	18	16	16	21	17
10	rative)	HLMI (g/10min)	54.38	69.37	69.80	97.57	86.33
15	в 7 - Сомра	MI ₂ (g/10min)	3.07	4.290	4.43	4.71	5.16
25	- Polymerization with (iBuCp) $_2 { m ZrCl}_2/SiO_2$. MAO (Example 7 - Comparative)	C6/C2 Hourly Prod. wt% ratio (GPE/gcat/h)	7,900	8,840	12,520	10,600	7,200
30) ₂ zrC1 ₂ /S10 ₂	C6/C2 wt% ratio	00.0	0.20	0.41	0.61	0.81
35	ith (iBuCp	1-hexene (wt%)	00.00	1.22	2.44	3.66	4.88
40	rization w	Hydrogen (N1)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
45		Entry Ethylene (wt%)	9	9	9	9	9
50	Table 8	Entry	н	~	m	4	ĸ

Examples 8 to 11

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Pilot Plant Scale Polymerisation procedures and results

[0036] The supported metallocene catalyst of Example 2 was used on a pilot plant scale in the 70 litre loop reactor under the conditions set out in Table 9. Table 9 also shows the results of these pilot plant scale examples, which confirm the earlier bench scale results.

TΔ	RI	F	C

		TABLE 9		
Example	8	9	10	11
CATALYST TYPE	(Ph)2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph)2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph)2 C Cp ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph)2 C Cp ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO
LOOP OPER. COND.				
Temp (°C)	85	85	85	80
Alkyl (TIBAL) (ppm/iC4)	250	250	250	250
Antifouling (ppm/iC4)	4	4	4	4
C2- (kg/h)	7	8.5	7.5	7
C6- (cc/h)	650	1049	1033	1467
H2 (NI/h)	5	5	5	5
IC4 (kg/h)	26 ·	26	26	80
OFF-GAS FINAL				
2- (wt%)	5.6	6.7	6.0	6.4
C6- (wt%)	0.88	1.38	1.23	2.07
H2 (mole%)	0.024	0.028	0.029	0.031
C6-/C2- ratio	0.16	0.21	0.21	0.32
H2/C2- ratio	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.005
CATALYST TYPE	(Ph) 2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph)2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph) 2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO	(Ph) 2 C Cp Flu ZrCl2/SiO2 .MAO
FLUFF FINAL				
HLMI (g/10')	0.66	0.53	0.97	1.24
Ml ₂ (g/10')	***	****	***	****
MI ₅ (g/10')	***	***	***	***
SR2	***	***	****	***
Density (g/cc)	0.918	0.917	0.914	0.912
Bulk Density (g/cc)	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37

Claims

1. Use of a metallocene catalyst component of general formula $R''(CpR_m)(Cp'R'_n)MQ_2$ in the production of linear low density polyolefin, wherein Cp is a cyclopentadienyl moiety, Cp' is a substituted or unsubstituted fluorenyl ring; R'' is a structural bridge imparting stereorigidity to the component; each R is independently hydrogen or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $Q \le m \le 4$; each R' is independently hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms in which $Q \le m \le 8$; Q' is a Group IVB transition metal or vanadium; and each Q' is hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms or halogen; the metallocene having a centroid-Q'-centroid angle in the range 105° to 125°.

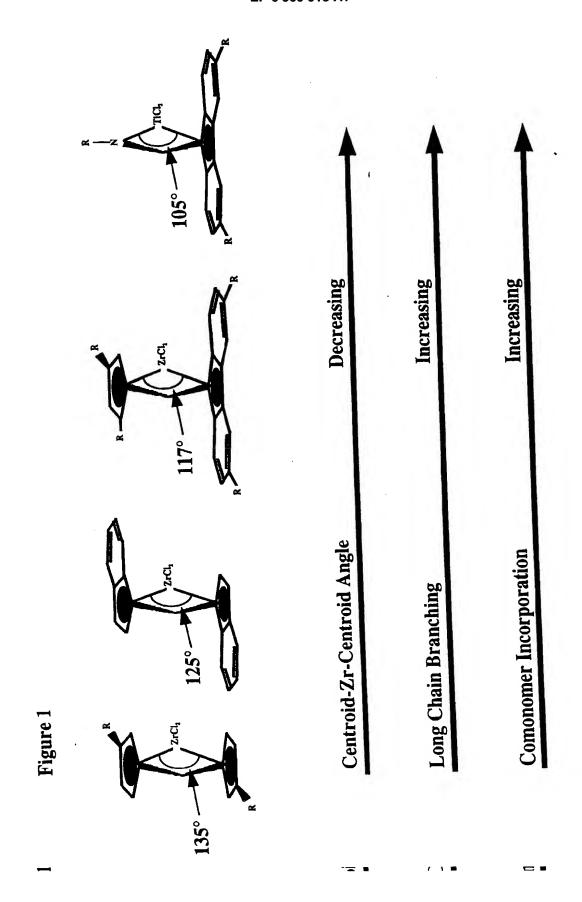
- 2. Use according to claim 1, wherein Cp is a substituted cyclopentadienyl in which each R is independently XR*3 in which X is C or Si and each R* is independently H or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.
- 3. Use according to claim 2, wherein the cyclopentadienyl is substituted with Ph₂CH, Me₃C, Me₃Si, Me, Me and Me₃C,Me and SiMe₃, Me and Ph, or Me and CH₃-CH-CH₃.
 - **4.** Use according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein each R' is independently YR"₃ in which Y is C or Si and each R" is independently H or hydrocarbyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.
- 5. Use according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein R" is alkylidene having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a dialkyl germanium or silicon or siloxane, alkyl phosphine or amine.
 - 6. Use according to claim 5, wherein R" is Me-C-Me, Ph-C-Ph, -CH₂-, Et-C-Et, Me-Si-Me, Ph-Si-Ph or Et-Si-Et.
- 7. Use according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein M is Zr or Hf.

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- 8. Use according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein each Q is Cl.
- 9. Use according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the centroid-M-centroid angle is no more than 119°.
- 10. Use according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the polyolefin is a polyethylene.
- 11. A process for the preparation of a linear low-density polyolefin, which comprises reacting an olefin monomer with hydrogen and an α-olefin comonomer in the presence of a catalyst comprising (i) a metallocene catalyst component as defined in any one of claims 1 to 10 and (ii) an aluminium- or boron-containing cocatalyst.
- 12. A process according to claim 11, wherein the olefin monomer is ethylene and the polyolefin is polyethylene.
- 13. A process according to claim 12, wherein the comonomer comprises 1-hexene.
- 14. A process according to claim 13, wherein the 1-hexene is present in an amount of from 2 to 10, preferably 2 to 5 % by weight of the total reaction mixture.
- **15.** A process according to any one of claims 11 to 15, wherein the cocatalyst comprises an alumoxane, an alkyl aluminium, a triphenylcarbenium boronate and/or a Lewis acid.
 - 16. A process according to any one of claims 11 to 15, wherein the catalyst is supported on an inert support.
 - 17. A process according to claim 16, wherein the inert support comprises a silica support.
 - 18. A process according to claim 16 or claim 17, which is performed in a slurry..
 - 19. A process according to claim 18, wherein the temperature is from 70°C to 110°C.
- 45 20. A process according to any one of claims 11 to 15, which is performed in a solvent at a temperature in the range 150°C to 300°C.
 - 21. A process according to claim 20, wherein the solvent comprises isobutane.
- 22. A linear low-density polyethylene obtainable from a process according to any one of claims 11 to 18, the density of which is below 0.93 g/cc.
 - 23. A linear low-density polyethylene according to claim 22, wherein the density is in the range 0.90 to 0.92.
- 24. A linear low-density polyethylene according to claim 22 or claim 23, which has a molecular weight distribution (D) in the range 2 to 4.5.
 - 25. A linear low-density polyethylene according to any one of claims 22 to 24, which is partially long chain branched.





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